

ENGLISH NEWSLETTER FOR TEACHERS

The English Newsletter for Teachers is published by the Information Resource Center of the Public Affairs Office of the United States Embassy, Santiago, Chile. Our goal is to provide up-to-date resources and materials for English Language Teaching in Chile.

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Editor: Nicholas Limerick

Instituto Chileno Norteamericano Spearheads English for the Blind in Chile

**By Eillen Smith, Academic Coordinator,
Instituto Chileno Norteamericano**

A group of five classmates have just begun their English class at Instituto Chileno Norteamericano. They come to class on time, pay close attention to their teacher's instructions, work well in groups and pairs, and do their own work. They are exceptionally motivated students. In their class work, they rely mainly on JAWS, a computer-reading program that pronounces the script in a robotic voice as the cursor moves across the screen. These students depend on JAWS because they are blind.

While some of the students in the program have been completely blind since birth, others have degenerative visual conditions or have gone blind later in life. The collaborative nature of the class doesn't end with English. One student with a guide dog often leads the other students out of the building after class, and those students who are just beginning to use canes get advice from other students with more experience.

The seeds for Instituto Chileno Norteamericano's groundbreaking English program for visually impaired students (Inglés Para No Videntes) were planted by Norteamericano's previous director Cristian Andrews. And from July to August of 2005, two Norteamericano teachers, Erasmo Veloso and Ivana Ramirez, went on a fact-finding and educational grant program to Seattle, which was funded by the United States Embassy, FONADIS, and Partners of the Americas.

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Teaching Thinking in Chile By John F. Wakefield, Ph.D.

Chileans are beginning to teach thinking in their schools. I came to Chile in late April to participate in the first international seminar on textbooks organized by the Chilean Ministry of Education, but I arrived a few days early to talk with teacher educators about teaching thinking. Teacher educators were very interested in this information, especially in the development of student thinking through programs such as Philosophy for Children.

Philosophy for Children was developed by Matthew Lipman, now professor emeritus of education at Montclair State University in New Jersey. I am familiar with it through a textbook I wrote that included it as an example of a program to teach thinking, and through corresponding with Dr. Lipman as I gathered material for my book. When I talked to Chilean teacher education faculty about the program, I learned that several faculty at different universities were already familiar with it. I expanded on my discussion of the program to include research findings, and the Chileans took special interest in what I had to say. This is what any teacher—especially a teacher of teachers—tries to do: Connect with the background of learners. I told the education faculty at the Universidad de Concepción that our session together was very much like a post-graduate seminar. It consisted more of highly focused questions and answers than a

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During the month that they were in Seattle, the two teachers immersed themselves in U.S. culture and visited various programs and institutions for the visually impaired in the United States, including Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind and Washington Library for the Blind.

Upon arriving back in Chile, Veloso and Ramirez, with the support of the institute's new director Juan Carlos Correa, designed a teacher's guide. This guide covers two levels and was used in the pilot class in September, as well as in the current class.

Norteamericano has every intention of continuing the program for people with visual impairment. It is a unique program in Chile, and the institute is proud to be on the cutting-edge of working with people with disabilities and technology-assisted learning. However, the institute also faces some challenges. The technical support for this program, hard- and software, has a price tag: teachers need to be trained and materials have to be created. Therefore, though the initial pilot was offered for free, the ongoing course and future courses will be offered at a considerable price. In the free pilot class there were 12 students; in the current class there are only 5 students, which is likely due to economic factors, Ramirez says.

There is a demand for ESL for blind and visually-impaired students, and at the Asociación Chilena Para Ciegos, many members were interested in taking the course for the blind. The Instituto is working on overcoming the obstacles outlined so that more people with visual impairment can take advantage of an offer that will positively impact their lives.

For more information, contact Ivana Ramirez or Erasmo Veloso at 677-7144

lecture from me. This and other discussions gave me both a specific and a general hope. Specifically, my discussions gave me access to the world of Chilean teacher educators, and I was able to connect with them not only in a discussion about Philosophy for Children, but in discussions of other ways to teach thinking that are used in the United States, and about teacher thinking as a model for student thinking. It is important that teachers make decisions about what to teach, how to teach it, and whether or not they are serving the good of the students in order to be models for their students' thinking. The time spent with Chilean teacher educators gave me hope that I did some good for Chileans with what I had to say. What a wonderful mutual understanding developed in the space of each short visit.

These discussions also gave me hope in a general way that the United States can help other nations develop citizenries that think broadly and deeply about important choices, including the way they educate their children. I believe that new democracies cannot thrive if their citizenries are raised to do only what they are told, or alternatively, to rebel equally thoughtlessly. Thinking begins in all children when the child wonders, and that wonder can be cultivated through school into thinking about a wide variety of things. How much progress might we make in strengthening democracies if this message about the importance of teaching thinking were taken to teacher educators in areas of the world where democracy is emergent? My hope is that the U.S. Department of State will try to do so in the years ahead.

John Wakefield is president of the U.S. Association of Academic Authors of Educational Texts and is also Vice President of Academic Affairs at the University of North Alabama.

English Language Learning Abbreviations Demystified

Perhaps you've noticed that a number of abbreviations abound for the learning of English. Here's a short guide to their meanings:

EFL	English as a Foreign Language	ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching	ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages	TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages		

More Than One Hundred Chilean Teachers Participate in Total Immersion English Language Program

One hundred ten English teachers from elementary schools and high schools in Chile participated in three versions of the Winter Institute for Teachers of English in Arica, Santiago, and Puerto Montt, respectively, led by specialists Spencer Salas and Deborah Farley from the United States. The Institute began July 14th in Arica, where 50 teachers remained in full English immersion for the duration of the week. From July 17th to the 21st, 25 other teachers attended a similar workshop offered in Santiago at the

Chilean North American Institute of Culture. Additionally, another 25 English teachers convened in Puerto Montt between the 24th and the 28th of July.

The initiative, sponsored by the United States Embassy and the

Ministry of Education of Chile's English Open Doors Program, attempted to keep the teachers in conditions of total immersion in English during their participation in the intense training and cultural activities program. The agenda included workshops on how to improve classroom skills, presentations of specialized material on teaching methods, a cultural program that included an exhibition of movies and conversational opportunities with native English speakers, and a session on how to motivate students to learn English. Teachers received knowledge of practical hands-on classroom activities, such as the Readers Theatre, an activity that includes turning storybooks into mini sketches in order to learn spoken English. This is just one of the many methods the teachers acquired for dividing up larger classrooms of children into smaller groups in order to better educate children.

Many of the teachers who participated in the Institute had experienced difficulties with English proficiency, and the environment of total immersion in English allowed them to improve listening and speaking skills. All the participating teachers were given books with exercises for students that could be photocopied legally, as well as storybooks for their classrooms.

Additionally, the distance some of the teachers traveled to attend the conference demonstrated their dedication

to teaching. At the Puerto Montt conference, one teacher even traveled two days by boat in order to arrive. All of the participants received certificates signed by the U.S. Embassy and the Ministry. At the end of the conferences, many teachers commented that the convention was one of the best training courses they had ever attended, and they requested follow-up workshops using the same methodologies. It seems that the participants and the organizers would both agree that the conferences were quite a success.



For additional information and links to excellent resources for English Language Learning, visit the [English Teaching Site](http://www.englishteaching.cl/)

<http://www.englishteaching.cl/>

[U.S. Embassy Santiago](http://www.usembassy.cl/)

<http://www.usembassy.cl/>

[And Chile TESOL](http://www.tesolchile.net/)

<http://www.tesolchile.net/>

We would like to invite everyone to contribute articles, suggestions, recommendations, advice, links, or even poetry. Our goal is to establish a network where English language teachers and students help each other. Please direct all contributions or questions to

ircchile@state.gov

with "English Newsletter" as the subject of your email.

Good Things Come in Small Packages

By Maggie Guntren

In The Long Run,
It's the Small Things that Make a Big Difference

Often when we think about educational reform and change, the amount of work seems unbelievable. Teachers sit on committees, policy makers debate long-term strategic plans and mission statements, and in the end, teachers and students need to ask, are these strategic plans and long-term "goals" really making a marked difference in student achievement or acquisition of language?

Many progressive educators and educational researchers are coming to the conclusion that planning is not the problem, but the long-term aspect of that planning is what is making teaching leaders rethink the process of becoming better at what they do. According to Mike Schmoker,

"A number of thinkers have weighed in on the importance of targeted, short-term cycles of improvement. The key is for teams of professionals [yes, that means us!] to achieve and celebrate a continuous succession of small, quick victories in vital areas. Fullan cites John Kotter, who urges us to 'generate short-term wins,' and Gary Hamel, who exhorts us to 'win small, win early, win often.' Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work speaks directly to the need for people to structure their efforts around clear goals and precise and short-term

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feedback. Research also suggests that teacher involvement in learning communities such as the English Teacher Networks who talk about new ideas, try them, and then come together to discuss results, has an enormous impact on how we teach, why we teach, and in the end, how much our students learn. It is important to stress that working on one skill or new method and learning it well is incredibly important when thinking about reform and changing classroom practice. This stress on changing one practice at a time until the “uniqueness” or newness of the practice has become common” is sometimes referred to as the tipping point (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping_point).

This article intends to help readers understand the concept of a tipping point, to review best practices in an English Language Learning classroom, and to apply the idea of the tipping point using visuals.

The Tipping Point

When referring to the “tipping point,” one is usually referring to the idea that “just as disease epidemics can start with a single person and then reach a point where they spread incredibly rapidly, social epidemics can do the same thing” (Krauss, plenary address, 2004). When thinking about this in a classroom, consider that if one teacher continues to implement a best practice constantly, the other teachers follow suit, and suddenly everyone is teaching using strategies that best support student learning. Oftentimes the best practices can be small changes. Even though we all talk about “systemic” reform as a large long-term event, sometimes the systemic change only needs to happen in our own classrooms to make the biggest difference. We as teachers are the only people that can change the way we teach, and in the long run, it does not matter what the policy dictates. It is about us taking the responsibility and saying yes to the possibilities.

Best Practices in English Language Learning Classrooms

Again, like the idea of large-scale reform, there are so many books and articles out about best practice that it is sometimes difficult to choose what really is “the best” for our own classroom situations and students. However, there are some instructional practices that really do make a difference in learning, whether you are teaching a microbiology class or an English language course. These best practices include: group work, building background knowledge, using scaffolds such as graphic organizers and visual supports, real, meaningful learning events in natural contexts, and teaching a new language as a means of communicating ideas. Which one do we choose? How do we incorporate all of these into our daily practice?

As the tipping point suggests, let’s try and focus on one of these best instructional methods at a time, learn and apply the strategies to our classroom, evaluate them to see if they are making a difference, and if not, change them and go through the cycle again. I imagine that a very strong and skilled teacher could really manage perfecting one or two of these best practices during a school year, but certainly not all. As teachers become proficient and practice each one, we can then add on to our repertoire of expertise. The goal is just not to stop at mastering one practice, but to continually encourage ourselves to professionally develop.

Applying the Tipping Point to One Best Practice

What does this look like in action? Let’s take one best practice, using visuals, and discuss four different ways that we can enhance just that one best practice. The chart below outlines the strategies.

In conclusion, the big picture is very important, but sometimes the best things, like student achievement, come in small packages.

Visual Strategy	How to Apply It	More Information
Using the chalkboard or whiteboard.	Of course, this seems like a simple one, but you would be surprised at how often the chalk or white board is underutilized. Every time you need to explain the definition of a word, try drawing it on the board without resorting to direct Spanish translations.	This used on a daily basis will not only support initial learning of a new vocabulary concept, but also help students try these strategies independently as they are studying or doing homework.
Working with three different colors of markers	When teaching grammar structures, for example, try consistently using one color for adjectives, one color for verbs, and one color for prepositions when demonstrating or discussing structures.	Please see above
Create a word wall of the most frequently used words in the English Language.		http://www.wordcount.org/main.php http://www.duboislc.org/EducationWatch/First100Words.html http://teachers.santee.k12.ca.us/carl/word_way_too.htm
Use pictures as much as possible	Sometimes the easiest way of describing or explaining a picture is to show a picture of it. Magazines, books, and newspaper all have a plethora of great examples as well as the internet.	www.google.com/Imagies (http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/default.aspx?lc=es-hn)

Ideas for Teaching Pronunciation

Many Spanish speakers struggle to correctly pronounce a number of sounds in English, but incorrect pronunciation is a leading hindrance of communication. Here are some creative ideas for teaching pronunciation.

Poetry

- ◇ Through its use of rhythm, poetry is a good way to practice speaking English. One website with available English language poems is <http://www.poets.org/audio.php>.
- ◇ A haiku is a type of Japanese poem with 3 unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five symbols, respectively. Reading and even writing haikus can be a good way for students to practice pronunciation.
- ◇ A limerick is another type of poem that can be used to teach English. They are particularly good for practicing English because they have predictable stress. Limericks usually include five lines, with the rhyme scheme *aabba*.

Bingo

- ◇ Pronunciation bingo can be a fun and very helpful game for students. It's best to think of a number of words that sound similar, such as *bath, bass, bat, Bess, best, bit, bus, but*, etc., and then make cards with the words and accompanying bingo boards. The winner can even read out the words for the next game

Drama

- ◇ Reading drama aloud can be a great way to practice pronunciation. If you divide students up into pairs, they will get more practice and can even focus on specific areas, such as intonation and rhythm.

Scavenger Hunt

- ◇ Ask students to find as many objects as they see that begin with a certain sound. This can also work with books and magazines.

We hope that you find these creative tips for teaching pronunciation helpful in your classroom!

Thanks to <http://www.soundsofenglish.org/tips.htm> for their ideas.

FULBRIGHT

*Comisión para el Intercambio Educativo entre
Chile y los Estados Unidos de América*



Want to Travel to the U.S. to Improve Your English?

Fulbright Begins Initiative to Add 100 Additional Chilean Scholarships

The Ambassador of the United States in Chile and honorary co-president of the Fulbright Commission Craig Kelly, on Monday, July 24th, made a protocol visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Alejandro Foxley, who assumed the position of honorary co-president of this binational commission for educational exchange. The Fulbright Commission has proposed an increase from 40 to 140 in the number of Chilean scholarship recipients each year, for which it is working on agreements with several Chilean government institutions.

Each year 40 professionals throughout Chile are selected to carry out their doctoral studies in the United States financed by the Fulbright Scholarship. Currently, there are 82 Chileans carrying out their doctoral studies in the United States, and another 20 will be added to this number when they depart in August, with a similar number leaving in the upcoming months.

The Fulbright Commission in Chile was created 51 years ago with the goal of promoting mutual understanding between Chile and the United States and stimulating study and research through educational exchange. Since the year 2000, it has become integrally binational, making it the first Commission in South America to have the active participation of the governments of both countries.

For information on applying for Fulbright Scholarships, please visit <http://www.fulbrightchile.cl/>.

A REFLECTION ON CHILEAN PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

By Melvin Patrick Ely, Ph.D.

Dr. Melvin Patrick Ely recently gave a series of talks in Chile on civil rights and racial integration in the United States. This is an excerpt of his reflection on conversations with Chileans on the subjects of race and culture.

Throughout my visit to Chile, I discovered, on the one hand, concern about immigration from neighboring countries and even from



China, and on the other hand, a remarkable and enlightened readiness on the part of many to talk frankly about the racial bias they perceive in their own society and how to combat it.

Among the hundreds of people I spoke with, the general attitude toward United States culture seemed to be warm, sometimes bordering on the adulatory. At the same time, one question and answer session after another revealed misconceptions about life in the U.S.: that crime is so prevalent in the States that people take their lives in their hands whenever they leave the house; that African Americans as a people tend toward violence; and indeed that the United States population is somewhere between 25 percent and majority black. These impressions did not shock me, as I've encountered them in other countries, too. I believe my tour afforded me the opportunity—without for a moment concealing the problems U.S. society faces—to correct misperceptions that prevail among people who have had no direct experience with the United States.

Not surprisingly, I found widespread and profound interest in the situation of Latinos, and especially that of undocumented workers, in

the United States, there having been a day of massive demonstrations about these issues in the U.S. only a week or so before my visit. I claimed no special expertise on this subject but tried to put the phenomenon in context—noting, for example, that the Latino immigrant community has friends in both the right- and left-wing communities of religious people in the US, and remarking that United States industry is likely to remain basically sympathetic to the idea of Latino immigration. My observation that religious conviction remains a major factor in United States life seemed to come as a revelation to many Chilean auditors.

One result of the tour was the reinforcement of an already existing interest among Chileans in race relations and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Some professors said they would like to incorporate those topics into their curricula. I remain in touch with the Chileans I met on the tour and hope to exchange advice and practical help with them in the near future. I always enjoy lecturing in other countries and meeting the people who live there, but my time in Chile was a true highlight of my career.

Melvin Patrick Ely has been the Newton Family Professor of History at the College of William and Mary in Virginia since 1995. He is the author of the books [Israel on the Appomattox](#) and [The Adventures of Amos 'n Andy: A Social History of an American Phenomenon](#).



Cartoon from
<http://www.fox.uwc.edu/Academics/Depts/images/comic65.jpg>

Entertainment

Upcoming Events for English Teachers

First English Grammar Conference in Chile

"Teaching English in Chile Today: The Role of Grammar" Scheduled for August 17-19

From Thursday, August 17th, to Saturday, August 19th, the first English grammar conference offered for teachers of English will take place at the Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, located on Av. José Pedro Alessandri 774.

The Embassy invites interested English teachers to attend. For more information on this event, contact the UMCE English Department at 241-2503.

Visit the U.S. Booth at the Expo Ingles International Fair

- ♦ September 7-9
- ♦ At Hotel Crowne Plaza, Santiago
- ♦ Information on English study alternatives will be available
- ♦ Visit www.expoingles.cl for more information

Third TESOL Chile Conference is Announced

September 31– October 2

Featuring H. Douglas Brown, Ph.D.

Dr. H. Douglas Brown will be the main speaker at the third TESOLChile Conference. He will give two lectures, including "Social responsibility and the Teaching of English" and "Latest Strategies in the Learning/Teaching of English," as well as two workshops: "Assessment in the English Classroom" and "How to Integrate Grammar and Vocabulary in a Text-Based Class." Dr. Brown is a leading expert on ESL and is a faculty member in the English department at San Francisco State University. Check www.usembassy.cl for more information in the near future.

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Online Resources for Teachers: Pronunciation

Antimoon.com's House to Learn English Pronunciation

<http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc.htm>

BBC Learning English Program, complete with multimedia resources

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/teachingenglish/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/multimedia/pron/>

EnglishClub.com's ESL Learning Center, Pronunciation Division

<http://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/index.htm>

English Pronunciation Test

<http://pauillac.inria.fr/~xleroy/stuff/english-pronunciation.html>

English Pronunciation Tip of the Day

<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/johnm/eptotd/tiphome.htm>

Eva Easton's Authentic American Pronunciation

<http://eleaston.com/pr/home.html>

Learn English's Pronunciation Resource Center

<http://www.learnenglish.de/pronunciationpage.htm>

Okanagan College's Multimedia Pronunciation Page

<http://international.ouc.bc.ca/pronunciation/>

Practice for Spanish Language Backgrounds

<http://www.btinternet.com/~ted.power/llspanish.html>

Pronunciation Resources for Different Levels

<http://www.lclark.edu/~krauss/toppicks/pronunciation.html>

Sounds of English Pronunciation Handouts Page

<http://www.soundsofenglish.org/Presentations/index.htm>

The U. S. Department of State accepts no responsibility for the content and availability of the resources listed above all of which were active as of August 2006.